

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

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THE UNIVERSITY
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COLLECTION

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIRST MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 1 February 1968, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. E.L.M. BURNS (Canada)

GE.68-2104
68-05811

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. J.A. de ARAUJO CASTRO
Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
Mr. E. MOREIRA HOSANNAH
Mr. A. da COSTA GUIMARAES

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV

Burma:

U MAUNG MAUNG
U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. A.G. CAMPBELL
Mr. J.R. MORDEN
Mr. A. BERNIER

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. T. LAHODA
Mr. V. VAJNAR

Ethiopia:

Mr. A ZELLEKE
Mr. A. ABDELRAHMAN NOUR
Mr. B. ASSFAW

India:

Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
Mr. N. KRISHNAN
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. R. CARACCIOLI
Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI
Mr. E. FRANCO
Mr. F. SORO

Mexico:

Mr. A. GOMEZ ROBLEDO
Mr. A. CARRANCO AVILA

Nigeria:

Mr. B.O. TONWE

Poland:

Mr. M. BLUSZTAJN
Mr. E. STANIEWSKI
Mr. S. DABROWA

Romania:

Mr. O. IONESCO
Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Mr. A. COROIANU
Mr. C. MITRAN

Sweden:

Mr. A. EDELSTAM
Mr. I. VIRGIN
Mr. R. BOMAN
Mr. J. PRAWITZ

Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. O.A. GRINEVSKY
Mr. V.V. SHUSTOV
Mr. V.B. TOULINOV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. KHALLAF
Mr. O. SIRRY
Mr. M. SHAKER

United Kingdom:

Mr. I.F. PORTER
Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE

United States of America:

Mr. S. DePALMA
Mr. L.D. WEILER
Mr. C.G. BREAM
Mr. A.F. NEIDLE

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative of
the Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Canada): I declare open the 361st plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

2. Mr. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translation from Russian): We have before us the complete draft of a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (ENDC/192/Rev.1, 193/Rev.1) submitted on 18 January, with changes and additions introduced in accordance with the wishes expressed by a number of non-nuclear States. First of all it is gratifying to note that all the representatives who have spoken during the discussion of this complete, revised draft have given it a positive appraisal. This gives us confidence that we shall be able to carry out within the prescribed time-limit the General Assembly's instructions (resolution 2346A (XXII); ENDC/210) by submitting to it a full report on the results of our work together with a draft treaty.

3. The Soviet delegation, in submitting the draft treaty on 18 January, gave general explanations concerning the new provisions (ENDC/PV.357). Today we should like to deal in greater detail with one of the aspects of the present draft treaty.

4. A very important question is that of the place the non-proliferation treaty will occupy in the whole series of measures aimed at eliminating the nuclear threat and reducing international tension. Considerable attention has been given to that question throughout the discussion of the non-proliferation problem. In preparing a draft treaty on non-proliferation we assumed from the very outset that the conclusions of such a treaty should be -- as laid down in General Assembly decisions -- a first step towards the implementation of nuclear disarmament measures. It is precisely with this aim in view that provisions expressing the intention of the parties to the treaty to achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the nuclear arms race have been included in the preamble to the draft treaty. The preamble also stresses the need to facilitate cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the liquidation of all their existing stockpiles, and the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery pursuant to a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

5. Recognizing the importance of those provisions, which, we understand, have met with a favourable response in the Committee, some delegations have expressed the view that the commitments in respect of nuclear and general disarmament should be laid down

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

directly in the operative part of the treaty in the form of a separate article. Specific proposals to that effect were contained in the working papers submitted to the Committee by Mexico (ENDC/196, article IV-C), Romania (ENDC/199, article III-A) and Brazil (ENDC/201, article II-A). We understand the desire of States to bring about the cessation of the nuclear arms race and thus protect themselves against the perilous consequences which a nuclear war might entail. We share their intention, which is also the intention of the overwhelming majority of States throughout the world, to move forward steadily towards disarmament.

6. The Soviet Union is well known to be resolutely in favour of the speediest possible implementation of effective nuclear disarmament measures, and consistently advocates the achievement of an agreement to scrap completely the military machinery of all States. As early as 1946 the Soviet Union put forward a programme for the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons and the liquidation of all their existing stockpiles (AEC/PV.2, pp.65 et seq.). Therefore, if we are to speak about the position of the Soviet Union, we may say that our State is in favour of the most radical solution of the disarmament problem and is prepared to take immediately any effective measures in that regard on which there is a possibility of reaching agreement.

7. The significance of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is precisely that it is in itself an important step in the series of measures in the field of nuclear disarmament, since it puts an end to both the direct and the indirect proliferation of nuclear weapons. But its significance is by no means limited to that. The very conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty will give an impetus to the solution of other broader problems of nuclear disarmament contributing to the consolidation of international peace and the elimination of the threat of nuclear war, and will thus facilitate the approach to the solution of the problem of general and complete disarmament.

8. That is not merely a conclusion which can be reached by bearing in mind the spirit of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The treaty text includes a special article binding States to pursue negotiations in good faith on measures regarding nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. Thus the obligation to conduct such negotiations has for the first time been placed on a definite legal basis.

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

9. It is our profound conviction that the conclusion of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be followed by a number of measures in the field of nuclear disarmament and disarmament in general leading to the achievement of the main objective -- general and complete disarmament under strict international control, which would put an end to the very existence of nuclear weapons. Accordingly it will be necessary to take measures to put a stop to all manufacture of nuclear weapons, destroy all their existing stockpiles and eliminate nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery from the arsenals of States.

10. The Soviet Union is prepared for such a radical solution of the question of nuclear disarmament, and expresses its firm intention to pursue negotiations on general and complete disarmament, as provided for by the non-proliferation treaty. We are prepared to seek a solution to this complex problem by instalments, and for this purpose to conduct negotiations on effective measures for ending the nuclear arms race and for disarmament. In accordance with the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, States will also undertake to pursue such negotiations.

11. In our opinion, after the solution of the non-proliferation problem the next important problem to be dealt with is the prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests. To supplement the Moscow Treaty banning nuclear weapons tests in three environments (ENDC/100/Rev.1) by banning also underground nuclear tests would erect an important barrier to the replenishment of nuclear arsenals with more sophisticated types of weapons. The cessation of tests in all environments would thus be an important step on the way, which is being paved by the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, to the cessation of the nuclear arms race. The Soviet Union is prepared to conclude an agreement on the prohibition of underground nuclear tests, and has repeatedly put forward proposals to that effect.

12. The discussions which have already taken place in the Committee on this question will serve as a useful basis for the further consideration and positive solution of the very important international problem of the prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests. Many States are persistently raising the question of the prohibition of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union has repeatedly put forward specific proposals aimed at a positive solution of this important international problem. At the twenty-second session of the General Assembly the USSR submitted

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

a draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons (A/6834). The Conference of the Heads of Non-aligned States, the United Nations General Assembly and many other authoritative international forums have adopted specific resolutions on this problem. There can be no doubt that the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and the outlawing of such weapons would correspond to the vital interests of the peoples of the world.

13. The existence in the world of huge arsenals of nuclear weapons, which are being enlarged all the time, and the incessant complications and military conflicts in various parts of the world, make the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons an urgently necessary and vitally important aim. Just as the Geneva Protocol of 1925 banned the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, a ban must now be imposed on that still more destructive means of warfare: nuclear weapons. The grip of international tension will weaken considerably and the curve of the arms race will steadily decline if important measures are carried out such as the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world, the liquidation of military bases on foreign territory, above all in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and many other measures the implementation of which is being urged by the majority of the States of the world.

14. In speaking of the urgent problems to be solved in the field of nuclear and general disarmament, we cannot disregard such an urgent measure as the prohibition of flights by aircraft carrying nuclear weapons beyond the national boundaries of States. The Soviet delegation has repeatedly pointed out in this Committee the dangerous consequences for mankind which the continuation of such flights entails. The recent incident in the Greenland area, involving a United States bomber carrying hydrogen bombs, has once again very convincingly emphasized the need for the conclusion of an international agreement prohibiting such flights.

15. In stressing the importance of solving the many problems in the field of nuclear disarmament, we also deem it necessary to point out that inclusion in the text of the treaty of specific undertakings regarding nuclear disarmament measures, however desirable it may be, is extremely difficult. We note with satisfaction that among the delegations there is a clear understanding of the difficulties that would arise in drafting a non-proliferation treaty if we

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

attempted to link the conclusion of such a treaty to the solution of other problems of nuclear disarmament. I may refer in this connexion to the statement made by the representative of Mexico, Mr. Castañeda, on 19 September 1967, when he said:

"... we are fully conscious of the obvious limits to the obligations which the nuclear Powers can assume in this respect in the present treaty. We are well aware ... that to stipulate that the non-proliferation treaty should include specific disarmament measures to be implemented by the nuclear Powers in the immediate future, would be tantamount to opposing the very existence of a non-proliferation treaty." (ENDC/PV.331, para. 21)

I should like to emphasize and to draw the attention of members of the Committee to the passage in that statement to the effect that it would be tantamount to opposing the very existence of a non-proliferation treaty.

16. It is impossible not to take into account the fact that on a number of questions of nuclear disarmament there is at present a considerable divergence in the positions of States. Therefore, an attempt to make more specific in article VI of the non-proliferation treaty obligations in regard to the solution of any particular disarmament questions could only create obstacles in the negotiations on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and make more difficult the achievement of an agreement on a non-proliferation treaty.

17. Of course, we do not hold the view that a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons will have some sort of magic power and be a panacea against all the evils that the arms race entails. This specific agreement has a quite definite purpose - to prevent any further enlargement of the group of States possessing nuclear weapons. Although the scope of this purpose is smaller than that of many other nuclear disarmament measures, its achievement would benefit all countries and would have great positive consequences for the solution of other problems in the field of nuclear disarmament.

18. This point of view is shared not only by political leaders, but also by eminent scientific specialists in the nuclear field, who know perfectly well what nuclear weapons are, what the consequences of their use would be, and what would be the result of an increase in the number of nuclear States.

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

In this connexion I should like to draw attention to the report submitted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the twenty-second session of the General Assembly on "The effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons on the security and economic implications for States of the acquisition and further development of these weapons". This document, as we know, was prepared by the scientific experts of twelve different States. It is pointed out in particular in the report that --

"... any further increase in the number of nuclear weapons States or any further elaboration of existing nuclear arsenals would lead to greater tension and greater instability in the world at large."

(A/6858, para. 82)

19. From this premise a conclusion is drawn which it would be difficult to refute; and I continue to quote from the report of the Secretary-General to which I have already referred:

"The solution of the problem of ensuring security cannot be found in an increase in the number of States possessing nuclear weapons or, indeed, in the retention of nuclear weapons by the Powers currently possessing them. An agreement to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons as recommended by the United Nations, freely negotiated and genuinely observed, would therefore be a powerful step in the right direction, as would also an agreement on the reduction of existing nuclear arsenals." (ibid., para. 91)

20. Supposing that we failed to conclude a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, it is easy to see what dangerous consequences for the whole world that failure would entail. Such an unfavourable outcome of our negotiations would above all render more difficult any further progress in the achievement of nuclear disarmament. As a result of such an outcome, in the first place public opinion would lose faith in the possibility of solving disarmament questions through negotiations; secondly, the position of those who oppose the achievement of an agreement to limit the arms race would be strengthened; and lastly, in a world in which the number of nuclear Powers would increase, it would be far more difficult than at present to reach agreement on any steps in the field of nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

21. The Soviet delegation is profoundly convinced that the non-proliferation treaty is a good beginning on the difficult path to disarmament. The prospect of negotiations in a spirit of good will and of the conclusion of agreements on other disarmament measures should be an additional stimulus to our efforts aimed at the speediest positive solution of that important international problem, the problem of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

22. The CHAIRMAN (Canada): If no other representative wishes to speak at this time, I should like with the permission of the Committee to say a few words, not as the representative of Canada but as the Chairman of this meeting -- a privilege which comes to each of us at every seventeenth meeting.

23. It is now two weeks since our co-Chairmen presented the latest drafts of a non-proliferation treaty (ENDC/192/Rev.1, 193/Rev.1). We have heard a very important statement by the representative of the Soviet Union on what might follow the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty, and also a warning -- I think it might be so described -- on what might happen if we fail to conclude a treaty. Seven delegations have so far spoken in regard to this treaty, and that number includes the co-Chairmen, but today no other delegation is ready to offer any comment on this matter of the draft treaty on non-proliferation which resolution after resolution of the General Assembly has stated to be of the most urgent importance. We have not all the time in the world to accomplish the task which the latest resolution of the General Assembly (resolution 2346A (XXII); ENDC/210) has requested us to undertake: that is, to report on our negotiations regarding a non-proliferation treaty. As the Committee knows, that report is to be a preliminary to a resumed session of the twenty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly which would discuss the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons on the basis of our report and the draft treaty which we are expected to lay before the Assembly.

24. In that regard I think it would be worth while to quote two passages from the statement made by the representative of Bulgaria at our last meeting. He stated:

"I have already said that the Committee has devoted more than one hundred and twenty meetings to the question of non-proliferation. During these meetings the problem has been sifted, most fully and

(The Chairman, Canada)

meticulously examined, dissected, discussed and studied in depth.

No one can claim that any particular aspect has not been studied sufficiently, or that something has been omitted, forgotten or left unexplained." (ENDC/PV.360, para. 21)

The representative of Bulgaria continued:

"I shall not presume to interpret the General Assembly's intentions, but I do not think that in fixing that time-limit the Assembly wished to reproach the Committee for its slowness. I believe rather that that decision was dictated by an increased awareness of the danger which the problem of proliferation of nuclear weapons represents at the present time, and of the urgent need to put an end to it." (ibid., para.22)

25. We have exactly six weeks before the report to the General Assembly is due; and I hope we can all agree that in the next two weeks all delegations that have not yet stated their views on the articles of the draft treaty will do so and will submit any suggestions they may have for further improvements. After that we shall probably need at least two weeks for the co-Chairmen, who are also co-drafters of this treaty, to consider whether there is a consensus on further amendments which would be useful. Then we shall probably need the remaining two weeks for the preparation of the report we are called upon to make.

26. That report is not likely to reflect completely unanimous views, although one may hope it will show general agreement. Many delegations will wish to have included in or attached to the report statements of the views of their countries, which may show differences of opinion on certain terms of the treaty as drafted.

27. If I may with all respect say so, I think we should keep in mind that the General Assembly has given us a certain job to be done by a certain time. There has been criticism, as we all know, of the length of time it has taken the Eighteen-Nation Committee to produce any results. We should also recall that in the recent publication of the United States Association for the United Nations concerning non-proliferation, which was referred to by the representative of Bulgaria (ibid., para.23), seven countries are listed as being able to make an atomic bomb in eight months to two years; and four of those countries are not represented in this Committee. Consequently, whatever we do here cannot be a conclusion but must be a preparation for the next step: that is, discussion in the wider forum of the United Nations General Assembly.

(The Chairman, Canada)

28. In concluding my remarks as Chairman, I should like to say that I hope all delegations here will agree that we should remember the limited time allotted to our task and set ourselves a time-table for completing it.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 361st plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador E.L.M. Burns, representative of Canada.

"Statements were made by the representative of the USSR and by the Chairman.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 6 February 1968, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.